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HINTS

ON

THE BEST METHOD

OF

ORIGINATING AND CONDUCTING

25-6

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

BY H. KEELING.

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and Publication Society.]

RICHMOND:

H. K. ELLYSON, PRINTER, 176, MAIN ST.

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To pronounce an eulogy upon Sunday Schools forms no part of the design of this tract. But the following extract from the Address of Herschel V. Johnson, esq., delivered before the Philosophical Societies of Mercer University, at its late commencement, so truly and so beautifully expresses the views of the author, that he makes no apology for its insertion :—

“Sunday Schools are the nurseries of youthful piety, where are laid the solid foundations of elevated character and useful citizenship. It is the rarest thing to find in any community a bad man who received in childhood, faithful and systematic Sunday School instruction.

“The tracks that are made by the footman as he strolls along the sandy beach, are swept away by the first flow of the tide. The inscription that is carved upon the bark of the forest tree by the idler who saunters among its recesses, is soon effaced by the hand of time. But the impressions made upon the unstained tablet of a child’s intellect, are as permanent as the immortal essence that receives them.”

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## PREFACE.

It is no reflection on other communities than cities and towns, that the latter generally enjoy facilities for originating and conducting Sunday Schools, which the former do not possess. In morals, as in other things, advantages or disadvantages may arise from mere position. It must, nevertheless, be conceded, that for wisdom and order of arrangement, and for energy of exertion, some of the best schools in all the land, are in villages and country places. Density of population promotes frequency of interview, and elicits interchange of thought and action; the retirement of the country is favorable to contemplation and study.

In a sparse population, it sometimes happens, that there is scarcely an individual who has ever been connected with a well arranged and efficiently conducted institution of this kind. Under such circumstances, it cannot fail, that when a school is contemplated to be undertaken, embarrassment will be felt, as to what method is best to be pursued. One, many, may be convinced of the importance and desirableness of the work, and earnestly aspire to its performance; but none may know how to proceed, nor where to begin.

In such cases, it would well repay the labor and expense of an individual proposing to commence a school, were he to visit, even at the distance of many miles, some well conducted school, and to inform himself particularly in reference to its whole proceedings. To glean every possible improvement in their respective fields of labor, architects traverse continents; engineers

cross the Atlantic ; machinists visit factories, docks, and navy yards ; and teachers of classical schools and professors in colleges, make the tour of Europe. Why should not the Sunday school teacher put himself to equal trouble for his noble and benevolent undertaking ?

It is worthy of remark, that mistakes in the initiatory proceedings, are often much more mischievous than those occurring at a subsequent period : because they are not only likely to be continued in the system adopted, but to chill the ardor of the less enthusiastic, and sometimes to secure the irreconcilable opposition of foes to the object itself.

Partly for the benefit of the inexperienced, who, nevertheless, desire to be useful in this field of labor ; partly with the hope of rousing the attention of others whose minds have not been attracted to this subject ; and especially, but not alone, with a view to the wants of his own denomination in Virginia, and in the south-western States ; has the author of these "Hints" ventured to suggest them to the friends of an enterprise, which, after many years of observation and experience, he regards, in its bearings on the interests of the churches and of the world, second in importance to none other except the ministry of the everlasting gospel.

The author will only add, that should they prove useful in subserving the great cause to whose interests they look, he will class it among several other cheering substitutes for the absence of those public labors for which he has for seven years been disqualified by bodily infirmity.

H. KEELING.

*Richmond, Va., August, 1847.*



# HINTS.

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## SECTION I.—THE OBJECT OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL.

This is in every case, the religious instruction of every pupil, with a view to his salvation. This of course includes, if unconverted, his conversion; if converted, the highest degree of moral cultivation that the appliances in use can furnish; in a word, his happiness and usefulness, both as a man and a christian in this world, and his everlasting glory in heaven.

It is not pretended that every pupil, or every teacher, looks to results so high and glorious; but the institution itself does—this is its tendency and its design. All other objects are either subsidiary, or incidental, or both—this is always the main and ultimate object.

Hence appears, notwithstanding its unpretending simplicity, the moral grandeur of the least imposing Sunday school. What most schools scout as impracticable, irrelevant, or sectarian, this fosters us the chief object of existence. What the best of them propose as their ultimate object, this employs as a mere instrument for effecting a far nobler object. And the disinterestedness of the teachers is among the proofs of the beneficence of their work. Their labor is philanthropic, not professional.

Accordingly, all experience has thus far shewn, that the Sunday school is the most efficient co-adjutor of domestic discipline and training; the most generous nursery of the churches; and the most powerful auxiliary of the christian ministry.

If the experience of the past is to be trusted in the hopes of the future, this is the Polytecnic school of the Zion of God,—its pupils are the plants of her future husbandry,—the materials of the temple whose founda-

tions have been laid, and whose walls are now rising to their completion.

In times of revival in religion, it is to this quarter the eye of faith and hope naturally looks for converts;—thence the pious and intelligent deacon, pastor, evangelist, and missionary of the cross are expected to arise;—here are the future men and women who will constitute that brilliant host, “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners.”

## SECTION II.—QUALIFICATION OF TEACHERS.

Qualifications and duties are always reciprocal. From either, the other may be inferred. If a christian pastor, must be “apt to teach,” it follows that to teach is one of his duties. So of the Sunday school teacher.

From his very profession, every christian is either a pupil, or a teacher, or both. Besides, to teach and to be taught are as natural to man, as is thought or breathing. The Sunday school is simply the application of these principles to religion, and the selection of the Lord’s day for its performance.

Ability to teach comprehends two things: information on the subject to be taught,—and skill in the manner of imparting it. Most failures occur in the last; the want of skill,—and this generally arises from neglect to improve talents already possessed. Hence, in a Sunday school teacher, moral qualities are those most requisite. The teacher of ordinary attainments and powers, but anxious to do good, will study to improve.

To teach faithfully in a Sunday school, for a series of years, and not to become distinguished for something really valuable, is scarcely possible. No teacher can teach what he does not know; hence, he is constantly progressing in knowledge. To commit to memory weekly, a single hymn, or a few texts of scripture; to study a single paragraph of the Bible, so as to be able clearly to expound it; to read a single chapter so as to read it *well* (a rare attainment even among professed scholars);—these will in time accomplish wonders.



However simple the lesson, the faithful teacher carefully studies it, ere he ventures into the presence of the smallest class. He would be ashamed to listen to the recitation of a hymn, he could not himself repeat.

To limit the attainments of a well qualified teacher, were highly officious. In mind, as in merchandize, a small capital, wisely managed, may lead to fortune, while a large one, badly managed, may plunge the possessor into ruin. But in this enterprise there are two qualifications, usually accompanied by great success. One is *fidelity*; the other, *a fixed determination to render the studies attractive to the class*.

*Fidelity* includes punctuality, industry, patience, self-denial, dignity, condescension, benevolence, in fine, all moral qualities. The faithful teacher knows and feels that he is responsible to his pupils, to the whole school, to his fellow-teachers, to the church, to parents, to the world, to himself, to God. Indeed, the second qualification,

A fixed determination to render the studies attractive to the class, is nearly allied to fidelity, if not a part of it. To the practicability of this, there are scores of objections, with the timid and the idle, but perseverance overcomes them all. The skill of a wise teacher will render *any lesson* attractive to *any class*. After particular acquaintance, he perceives the capabilities and tastes of his pupils; and his zeal for their welfare, dictates the fittest thoughts, and the fittest mode of conveying them.

If then it be asked, "who, in view of all this, is fit to be a teacher?" We ask in our turn, "who is fit for a parent?" Who for a brother? Who for a sister? Who for a church member? Who for a citizen?" To attract the hearts and minds of children to truth and moral beauty, is the duty of every adult, and is the noblest employment of rational beings on earth. The consciousness of having done this will constitute much of the felicity and glory of the heavenly state. "They

who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars in the firmament forever and ever."

With little variation, the qualifications of one teacher, are those of all. The instruction of *mere beginners*, demands accomplishments as rare and varied, as that of the more advanced classes. Also the work is little less coveted by enlightened understandings and generous hearts. The health of the infant is studied with as much care by the parent and the physician as that of the adult; and his interests are advocated with the same ability at the bar. With the husbandman, seed-time is quite as important as harvest; and with the architect, the ornaments of an edifice are not more an object of attention than the foundation itself. In this view of the subject, the Psalmist prayed, borrowing one of his similes from agriculture, and the other from architecture, "May our sons be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace." Alas, for the teacher who deems his time and talents of too much value to be devoted to those, of whom the Redeemer said, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not—for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He utterly misapprehends the whole subject.

For these reasons, no suggestions are made respecting the *grades* of teachers. And as regards the superintendent, he is, when the school is a small one, a principal teacher, and when a large one, to the whole corps, what a general is to an army.

### SECTION III.—WHO OUGHT TO BE PUPILS?

Some answer "The poor." Whoever may have repeated this answer, its inventor was probably the same, who in reply to the question, "Who ought to be religious?" replied, "The old,—the illiterate,—the weak-minded,—the afflicted." If Sunday schools are fitted *only* for the poor, or for any other one class, so also is the gospel. Our answer is, "All who are not teachers,

and many who are." The same person may, in many cases, be both a teacher and a pupil.

In the early history of Sunday, Sabbath, Lord's-day, or First-day schools, in England, the benefits were designed *exclusively* for the poor, to whom they are now also, *mostly* confined. But this is not the only instance in which a plant has flourished better as an exotic, than it did when indigenous. Other institutions have likewise found a better soil, or better seasons, or a better cultivation, in this new world, than they had found in the old.

The youth of sixteen egregiously errs when he says, "I am too old now, to go to Sunday school." No man can be too ignorant, nor too learned; nor can any child capable of loving and honoring its parents be too young, nor a grand-sire too imbecile; to study the *facts*, the *truths*, and the *duties*, of the Bible—the only text-book of Sunday schools. The poetry, the philosophy, the metaphysics, the speculations of religion, are innocent if not improving; but they are not vital to the thing itself. Truth is, and its only source is the Bible.

The amount of literary culture that may be advantageously employed in a Sunday school is absolutely illimitable. This is emphatically, the one great theological school, adapted to all the members of every church of Christ, and to the whole race of man—enclosing the whole field of thought and enquiry, both inspired and uninspired.

Here the little school Miss may profitably employ her grammar, geography, rhetoric, logic, history, philosophy, French, Latin, every thing she knows, in investigating *the most attractive lessons in the universe*.

Here the untutored heathen may learn *the simplest lessons in the universe*.

Here the linguist, the judge, the advocate, the statesman, the greatest man that lives, may apply all his powers and resources in studying *the wisest and profoundest lessons in the universe*.

Here, for ourselves, we should like to continue to



teach, and to learn, were our present three-score years increased to those of Methusaleh.

#### SECTION IV.—CLASSES.

Classes may be as numerous as can be accommodated. It is better as a general rule that the male and female be separate classes: though this is less necessary, with small children, and with those who are capable of self-government. Some of the best classes have been formed with no distinction; varying from twelve to sixty years, and of both sexes.

In all cases it is important that beginners be separate from advanced scholars; and that their classes be small, not exceeding four or five pupils each. The necessity of this is obvious; since they can learn but little except what they are taught, and that, one at a time.

To suppose that the minor classes may be committed, in any numbers, to any teacher, is an egregious mistake. Two children, one child, may engross the whole attention of a philosopher and philanthropist. Nor must the advantage of the child be estimated by his obvious improvement, especially at first. His very proximity to the teacher is of incalculable benefit. And such a teacher knows how to win his little auditor. His very enquiries, as to his place of abode—the inmates of his home—his companions in childhood, and their gleesome amusements—may all conduce to the pleasure and instruction of the future man.

A striking instance of what may be done by minds almost infantile, when under the guidance of skilfull teachers, is exhibited in an oral school for the colored population in Penfield, Ga. This school comprises from ninety to one hundred boys, girls, men and women, but few of whom can read. The teachers are mostly young gentlemen and young ladies of the village:—some students in Mercer University. For one exercise, each pupil learns a hymn at the opening of the school. The utility of this is seen at once, because they sing that same hymn at the close of the school for that day.

Often have we seen the faces of the pupils beaming with joy that after half an hour's application they could sing a whole hymn by rote. You might in the ensuing week hear the nurses in turn, teaching it to their charges; and hear it from the garden, the orchard, and the ironing table. All the classes learned the same bible lesson, and rehearsed it *en masse*, to the superintendent at the close of the school for the day.

It is also material, that the advanced classes be so small as to allow each pupil to be heard by all the rest, without annoying the neighboring classes by loudness of voice. All large classes should be taken, when practicable, to separate rooms, or beyond the sound of the other classes.

#### SECTION V.—ORDER OF THE SCHOOL.

The time allotted to Sunday school operations is from one and a half, to two and a half hours, previous to public worship. This period would be entirely too short for the accomplishment of much, were it not, that the whole of the preceding week has been devoted to preparation for this service; and this is in its turn, a propelling power, producing similar application during the ensuing week.

When the hour for opening the school arrives, every pupil is on the spot, and every teacher at the head of his class. The teacher never permits his class to convene before his arrival. He welcomes them as they arrive; and his presence is the best guaranty against confusion and noise. The order and success of the whole school essentially depend on the punctuality and entire fidelity of each teacher. No substitute is admitted except in cases of necessity; and absence without a substitute evinces lamentable indifference.

At the touch of the little bell by the superintendent, every eye fastens on him. No noise with the feet—no turning of leaves—not a whisper—no passing out or in—if there is breathing, it is inaudible. While he announces the hymn twice, every teacher and every pupil



finds it. He then reads it distinctly and impressively: a service for which he has previously prepared himself, as he has for *all* the services of the day. Whether he sings well or ill, every body sings. This must be done. Singing is as much practical as theoretical. Birds do not wait to be taught to sing; and music is as natural to man as to birds. He then prays, or calls on a visitor to pray, or on a teacher, taking them alphabetically, or according to age, or by classes. The prayer is short and pertinent. The singing is performed standing; the prayer is offered standing or kneeling, but never sitting.

He then reads and expounds a paragraph, not taken at random, but in regular order of book and chapter, or selected a week previously, and studied with great care, aided by commentaries, conversation, enquiry, every accessible means of preparation. During the reading of the scripture and its exposition, every pupil has his bible open before him. The *mere reading* of this lesson, must be a lesson worthy of imitation; for it will be imitated.

The whole service, singing, prayer, reading, exposition, and remarks, need not occupy more than twenty or thirty minutes. Combining as it does, comprehensiveness with brevity; such lucidness that a child can understand, with such information that a lawyer or a divine must listen:—this service affords opportunity for the exercise of consummate ability. Every pupil who can read, has his eye, now on the book, and now on the superintendent; and the little ones who cannot read, must be (not *still*, for that is unnatural and impossible,) but perfectly silent.

At the close of this service, the superintendent re-surveys his whole school, interchanging recognitions with teachers and pupils—all of whom are known to him—supplying the places of absentees, if any, by scholars from the higher classes—and assigning to new pupils their respective places: He also sees that the librarian and the secretary are at their posts, or supplies their place by his own authority. He does not permit a single voice to annoy the school.

Now the classes are ready for recitation *and* instruction. Without a *combination* of these, much proficiency is not to be expected. If the teacher devotes his whole time to *instruction*, it may all be wasted; since he then has no means of knowing whether the memory, the understanding, or the diligence of the pupil, has been in the least degree taxed—or if all be devoted to *recitation*, he becomes merely a *hearer* and not an *instructor*. The instruction imparted must be made irresistably attractive; or it may not enlist on the part of the pupils those enthusiastic feelings which consent to be thus taxed.

During the progress of the school, every thing moves on smoothly and quietly. The Sunday school is no place for jesting, or for long-facedness. All must wear the aspect of May, and possess the solidity of marble. Here are minds acting upon minds; and hearts upon hearts; the grand affairs of souls and eternity connected with the curiosity and pleasantness of childhood and the buoyancy of youth. We must have gayety without frivolity; sobriety without gloom; vivacity tempered with seriousness; perfect order, but no restraint except voluntary.

All this and more, is practicable. We have seen it over and over again, among hundreds of pupils in the same school. The interim between the close of the lessons, and the dismissal, may be occupied in scriptural stories; general or particular advice; and such items of pleasant and useful information as the various reading of the teacher may supply. He should be familiar with all the passing events of the present age, and able to state and comment upon them, with reference to the moral profit of his little auditory. In the course of the progress of the school, the librarian sees to it that the books loaned on the previous Lord's day as rewards for diligence, are returned in good order, or accounted for; and that the new supplies are properly entered. The secretary reports to the superintendent, at the close of the school, the state of things for the day,—the number

of pupils and teachers in attendance; cases of absence; additions; in a word, the state of the school. All of which is announced from the desk. Dismission takes place by classes, No. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., &c.

## SECTION VI.—LESSONS.

The minor classes may learn the alphabet, orthography, primer, child's catechism, simple hymns, &c. Those a grade higher may read scripture, commit to memory given texts, study the biography of eminent persons, &c., &c.

From about No. 3 upward, Bible classes may rise indefinitely, but all are resolvable into *two divisions*; those which regard the *language alone* of the Bible,—and those which look to the *thought* and the *meaning*.

1. Those which regard the *language alone* of the Bible. This division of classes comes within the range of the commonest intellect of the youngest child. The *very words* of the Bible are both the text and the commentary. Let us illustrate by example. Take Gen. 1: 1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," &c.

Q. *By whom* was the world created?

A. By "God."

Q. *What* did God create?

A. The "*heavens and the earth.*"

Q. *When* did God create the world?

A. "*In the beginning.*"

Or take the following passage. Luke 1: 1, 4:—

Q. To whom did the author of this gospel address it?

A. To "Theophilus."

Q. From whom did he derive his information?

A. From those "who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word."

Q. With what design did he address him?

A. That he might "know the certainty of those things wherein he had been instructed."

2. Those which look to the *thought* and *meaning*. This division of classes may occupy the most cultivated



minds, and will require some investigation beyond the mere text. Take for example again, Gen. 1: 1. "In the beginning, God created," &c.:—

Q. What is meant by the word "beginning" in this place?

Q. Define the word "create?" Does it mean to bring into existence from nothing? or only to modify from preëxisting materials?

Q. How long a time did the work of creation occupy?

Q. Can you answer the cavil of those free-thinkers, who, against the Mosaic account, alledge, that the goodness of God should not have permitted an eternity to pass before the creation of man?

Q. Is the term six days, used here in the ordinary acceptance, or in a sense consistent with the developments of geology?

Or we may take as before, Luke 1: 1, 4:—

Q. Who wrote this gospel?

Q. Was he a Jew or a gentile?

Q. Where did he reside?

Q. Was Theophilus probably a person?

Q. Who were the "many" authors of narratives to whom this author alludes?

Q. Does he ascribe to them any bad motive in writing?

Q. What has been the fate of their works?

Q. In what respect were they deficient?

Q. Is there in this preface any implied reflection on other narratives, previously written, and which have been received as inspired, and included in our Bible, &c., &c.?

In some of the question books, used in Sunday schools, questions of the former class are in *larger*, and those of the latter in *smaller* print. But it is important that the teacher suggest questions of his own,—and that the pupil be taught to ask himself questions,—especially should the minor classes be taught to ask those questions that are answered in the text itself.

## SECTION VII.—BOOKS.

The books requisite for a Sunday school are of two kinds,—those which constitute the library; and those necessary to belong to the teachers and pupils, or be in their possession as if their own. We speak :—

1st of the other books. For beginners, few books are necessary, indeed, not many books are essential for any class. The Bible and the teacher are the principal sources of information. Bibles, Testaments, question books, hymn books, catechisms, primers, Bible dictionaries, biographies of persons eminent for piety and usefulness, compendious commentaries on the Bible, or parts of the Bible, every necessary book can be had on the best terms, by application at any of the depositories, or distinguished bookstores in any city or town in the Union.

2. The library. Directions on this subject are among the greatest difficulties of our task. As regards the means for the purchase of a library, it is sufficient to say that wherever a school can be organized, the means cannot be wanting to purchase such a library as is furnished by the American Sunday School Union, or the Baptist Sunday School and Publication Society in Philadelphia. The cost of one hundred volumes is ten dollars.

But as regards the books themselves, fittest to be sought, much depends on the character of the school. Nor ought it to be concealed, that among the books prepared for children, the chaff greatly exceeds the wheat. We often find in the same book, mixed up with some pure truth, much that is false, and more that is valueless.

One cause of this evil is, that minds of high order, have nevertheless been guilty of the prodigious error, that such productions are unworthy their ambition. Another is, that the meagre price at which such books are expected to be sold, affords too little compensation for the labor of writing and publishing. Religious books and religious periodical literature, especially for the young, to escape the censure of being catch-penny



enterprises, have sought to be as nearly as possible, mere gratuities. It is hoped that a better condition of things is about to arise. In the mean time the teachers themselves, aided by their ministers, and other literary friends, should exercise caution on this subject. And even when a book of good reputation has been adopted, a candid judgment should be exercised as to every paragraph of its contents. One sentence may be a diamond; the next a pebble or a poisonous mineral.

#### SECTION VIII.—OBSTACLES TO BE OVERCOME.

These present themselves in every benevolent and lofty enterprise. Why should Sunday schools be expected to be exempt? We mention only a few of the worst, to shew that most, if not all, may be made promotive of the object.

1. *The absence of regular worship, except for one or two Lord's-days in each month.* This is seriously felt in large portions of the southern and western states, where the population is sparse. The answer is, that a Sunday school is the best possible substitute for the ministrations of the gospel, if indeed it is not one form of the thing itself. And wealthy members, who ride from home, six or seven miles, in various directions, on successive Lord's-days, to listen to popular preachers, leaving their domestics, their children, the poor of their neighborhood, and even the wealthy who are disinclined to go so far, destitute of the means of public worship, would do well to consider whether they might not be more usefully employed. A single Lord's-day spent in giving and receiving religious instruction in a Sunday school, would be a greater blessing than a score occupied in these weekly journeys.

2. *Sparsity of population, distance, vicissitudes of season, &c., &c.* These should affect Sunday schools, no more than they should general education, courts of justice, social intercourse, or any thing else that requires absence from one's own premises. Wherever society can exist otherwise than in isolated families, there may

be a Sunday school. Exercise and exposure are essential to health. And experience shews that district schools continued in winter, although smaller, are larger in summer, than those that are abandoned in winter on account of the cold. The temporary dispersion of a school injures it.

3. *The difficulty of government where there is no power to punish.* Power to reward exists, and this is far better. Besides, moral coercion is the strongest conceivable. The severest punishment of the sternest master we ever knew, was, "Are you dull, Jim?" And the remark, "I thought you had better taste," is a keener rebuke to a child, whose sensibilities are awakened in a Sunday school, than all the rods and dunce-caps in christendom.

4. *Either the Sunday school must obliterate castes in society, or it is doomed yet to suffer great hindrances from them.* It must be acknowledged that the petted child of a rich man, may avoid the approach of the poor, and that the latter may be ashamed of his inferior garb: but the same objection weighs with as much force against all other associations of men. When this difficulty is felt in the Sunday school, it is the province of the teacher's wisdom and goodness to inculcate a more excellent way, and to assure the confidence of the poor. Distinctions in the conditions of men will always exist; but the Bible teaches that the rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the Maker of us all. The man who resolves to associate for no purpose, with any who are in any sense inferior to himself, or from whom he is not to receive benefit instead of conferring it, does by this very resolution, insult his own understanding, and rebuke his own impertinence. Since his associates must be superior to himself, he demands of them what he concedes to none. If there be any one place on earth, above all others, adapted to originate and cherish the most exalted principles and the finest moral feelings, it is the Sunday school. If it fails to do this, the teachers are in fault.

5. *The attempt has been made, and success was only temporary and partial.* This is very possible. An agent or a friendly visitor excited a momentary interest, which perished with its novelty. It is fully conceded, that an undertaking so noble and generous as a Sunday school, cannot succeed without labor and sacrifice by some one. These are supposed to be justified, demanded, rewarded, by all other pursuits. The Bank officer, the sheriff, the professional man, and the man of business, forego their pleasures and brave the elements. Is it to be expected of religion and benevolence alone, that they, in every shape they assume, are to flourish spontaneously? Briers and thistles may thus grow, but corn must be cultivated. The loss of a single adventure does not drive the merchant from Broadway. Renew your efforts.

6. *Want of place, want of assistants, general apathy, misconception of the utility of the thing.* A whole host of such objections vanish at the touch of one man, or one woman, or one young girl, whose heart is in the work. We know it, because we have seen it repeatedly. The most efficient schools we ever knew, were originated and conducted amid these and scores of such obstacles: an individual governing the whole machine, like the main-spring of a watch, and that too a retiring lady, not heard, and scarcely seen in the business, except as a teacher at the head of her class. If teachers are wanted, raise them;—if money is needed, give it, if you have it, if not, work for it, or beg it; if all except yourself are indifferent to the subject, the fact that you convince and rouse them to exertion, is the strongest proof you can give that you are not yourself indifferent.

#### SECTION IX.—MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

1. *Visiting.* We do not affirm that no Sunday school has ever prospered, whose pupils were not visited by the teachers; but this is an important element of success. The late Dr. Bedell, of Philadelphia, deemed it essential; and of so great utility was it considered by the late



Dr. Chalmers, of Scotland, that he made many thousand, if not tens of thousands of these visits in his own person. Visiting secures both the affection of the pupil and the confidence and coöperation of the parents. Even though religion and the Sunday school were to be both passed over in the interview, which by no means should be the case, yet the effect of the visit may be salutary. The visits of visitors are no substitutes for the visits of teachers. It is the teachers who must know and love the pupils; and be known and loved by them.

2. *Teachers' meetings.* The good sense and piety of a corps of teachers, will soon suggest the necessity of interviews respecting their plans, and the best method of executing them.

3. *The collateral advantages of Sunday schools.* It is next to impossible for a well conducted Sunday school not to elicit inquiry, and research, and exertion, among pupils and teachers, respecting other but kindred objects. The papers (and some religious periodical should regularly visit every Sunday school,) will excite attention to the Temperance cause, the Mission cause, the Education cause, &c. Hence so many schools *are* Temperance societies: and most efficient ones they are.

The very collections at the close of the school, teach the pupils to give.

As one instance of the collateral advantages of Sunday schools, it is highly probable, that, excepting the pulpit, they do more to effect the religious observance of the Lord's-day, than all other instrumentalities combined.

4. *Examinations, visitors, patronage, &c.* We have known some laborious teachers who greatly lamented their want of success. Either their classes did not improve; or if they improved, they were not converted to God.

As regards the conversion of our pupils, our children, or of any for whom we labor, our dependence is on God. It is ours to plant, and to water,—to give the increase, is God's.

We should also recollect, that God has made us re-

sponsible for our duty, not its results. We may not live until the harvest, and yet the harvest may come, and an abundant one it may be.

As regards improvement, some teachers, and able ones too, teach too much. The teacher must not only *lecture*; he must *exact a recitation*.

If a pupil has been so badly trained elsewhere, as to be incapable of feeling or comprehending motives of one kind, he may be able to comprehend and feel those of another. And it is a great and fundamental truth, that the best motives are equally within the understanding and the heart of all. The little ragged urchin of four years of age, taken from the highways, or hedges, is an immortal being, and has the same common nature with the offspring of judges and senators.

It is well to solicit the attendance of the wise and the good to witness the proceedings of the class. The older members of the churches, if they do not teach, should at least visit the school—and do it often—feeling and shewing a deep interest in the recitations.

When Conventions, Associations, and other religious bodies are in session, their company, either in body, or by committees, should be asked, and cheerfully afforded.

#### SECTION X.—APPEAL TO THE READER.

Are you a member of a Sunday school, either as a teacher or a pupil? If not, is there such a school in your neighborhood? If there is one, and you have taken no part in it, be entreated to consider the import of these pages. And if there is not one, is it too much to hope, that you will, without delay, use your best exertions to establish one?

1. *Perhaps you are a minister of the gospel.* It is greatly to be feared, that with here and there an exception, the moral power of a Sunday school is not half appreciated, even by the ministers of the gospel themselves. Dear brethren, excuse us, therefore, if we appeal especially to you. Next to the pulpit, this is your most promising field of effort. Your Lord's day labors,



excuse you from the additional burden of giving instruction to classes on this day; but perhaps you may conduct a Bible class on some other day, and thus raise up well qualified teachers. Indeed, the pupils in your classes on week days, may teach in the schools on Lord's days; and thus the lesson you give to ten pupils on Monday, may be repeated on the following Sunday to a hundred others. But your frequent presence,—your counsel,—and your personal influence, are the things we ask. Not a cold assent,—but a hearty coöperation,—a taking of the lead in the matter. To teach is the great business of your life. Although Judaism was emphatically a religion of law and regulations, yet even in it, teachers held a conspicuous place. All false and defective systems of religion, are systems of form, or of art. Christianity is preëminently a religion of instruction. "Teach all nations." "Whom (Christ) we preach; warning every man and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The prophetic office of the New Testament is the office of religious teacher. Now the Sunday school enables you to multiply your exertions. It gives you scores and fifties of deputies. You become the main-spring of a machinery, mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong-holds. And the whole of this tremendous power, you thus wield, you bring to bear on the most auspicious period of life, childhood and youth. Even that least girl in the school,—unable yet to spell in syllables, and who looks to you for a word of commendation, may be some Ann Hasseltine, or Henrietta Hall; and perhaps that little boy is a future Judson or Cary. But if not, they are immortal beings, and have a claim upon your humanity at least.

2. *Or perhaps you are a parent.* Then you are the natural guardian of the education of your offspring. From this tremendous responsibility no power but that of God can absolve you. If you have not the means, it is your duty to labor to acquire them. If you are

yourself without education, it is your duty to obtain it for the very purpose of imparting it. To *every* parent, of whatever facilities, a good Sunday school is in this business, one of the most powerful auxiliaries on earth. Not the press, the pulpit, and the day-school combined, are superior to it. Those parents who rely on a Sunday school, as a substitute for family religion, are highly censurable; but equally great is the mistake of those who neglect the Sunday school.

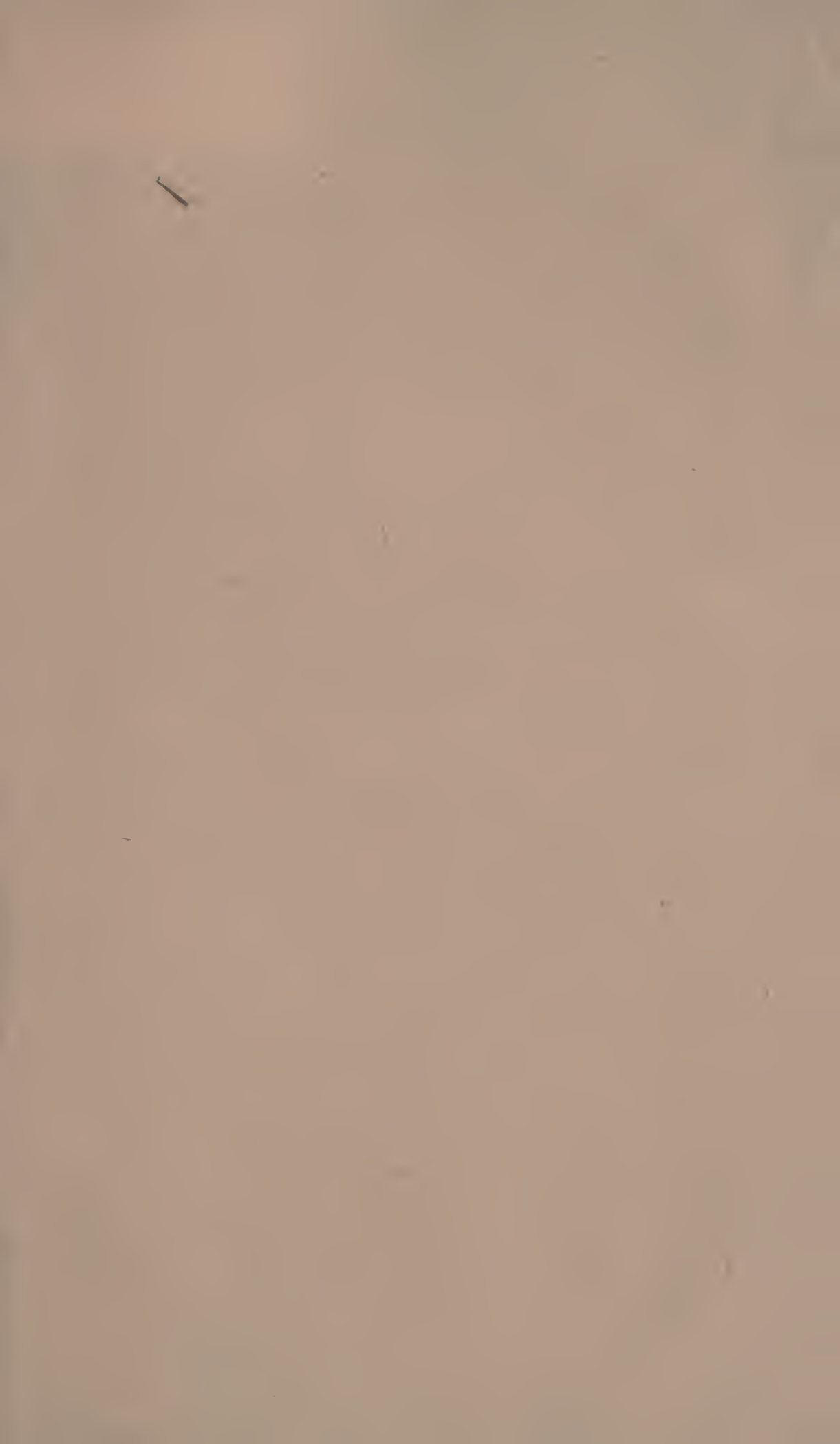
3. *Are you a professional man?* What your profession may be, matters not. Let not the mechanic *send* but *bring* his journeymen and apprentices; the merchant his clerks; the learned advocate at the bar, his students of law; the physician his medical classes; the college professor, and the classic, and the common school teacher, their classes respectively; and let them be themselves the teachers of those they bring. One of the most melancholy spectacles of this evangelized country is, that in all the various professions, there are so many men, with youth committed to their care, who know nothing of their Sunday pursuits. If the apprentice or the clerk, perform his duty six days in the week, the employer or master, knows not even his whereabouts on Sunday. If youth thus trained, or thus neglected, avoid the vortex of destruction, it approaches a miracle. If the Sunday school were for the ignorant, the pauper, the degraded—then were it noble to enlist in this cause. But this is not the view taken in these pages. It is for all. Its benevolence is boundless as the light; its diffusiveness as vast as the atmosphere itself.

4. *Are you a wife,—a mother,—a sister,—a daughter?* Then teaching is your appropriate business. The education of man as a race, devolves for the first ten years, almost wholly upon woman. Such is, by the regulation of heaven, the constitution of the world. Our race comprehends but two classes,—adults and children. By whom are the latter to be taught, if not by the former? And for this ennobling and refining employment, who has the taste and the heart, if woman has not? But whether you choose it or not, you do the work.

You may try to shun the responsibility by paying the salary of the day-school teacher, or by shifting off your little charge to the Sunday school; but the character of every generation of our species is moulded by wives, mothers, daughters, sisters. Whether you choose it or not, you do the work. See that you so do it, that you will not repent it.

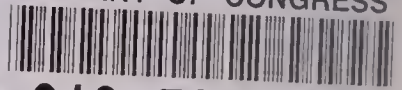
5. *Are you a child?* Our final appeal is to *yourself*. You are at last the individual whose mighty interests are at stake; and you have reason and moral sense. Our final appeal is therefore to you. If your parents are not convinced of the utility of our enterprise; if your friends, the church, and your minister, are insensible to what we consider your highest wants; listen to one who knows what he says; who can have no interest in deceiving you; and who sincerely loves you.

Obtain permission from those to whom you owe subjection, to attend a Sunday school. Cultivate the powers you possess. Their greatness for good or for evil, exceeds your vastest conjecture. If you are not at first delighted with your pursuit, be not in haste to be displeased. Ascribe your want of interest to yourself, to this particular school, to any thing rather than to the system. Your curiosity will become awakened, only to be gratified that it may be again excited. In proportion to the frequency with which you drink at her crystal fountains will you thirst and pant for knowledge. Your taste for the beautiful, the refined, the true, will become cultivated in a degree, inperceptible to yourself, except by comparing some antecedent with some subsequent period. In a few years at most you will be unhappy on Lord's day, except at a Sunday school. And God's providence will in time open to you a theatre in which you may shew his glory, and render to your friends, and perhaps to the world, untold service. Were the days of infancy and childhood of the author of these "*hints*" to be again passed over, he would prefer as an alternative, if only one were possible, rather to be brought up in a Sunday school, than at the feet of Gamaliel, or in the schools of the prophets.





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